

# In the United States Court of Federal Claims

## OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 20-1928V

UNPUBLISHED

LAUREL ACOSTA,

Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

Chief Special Master Corcoran

Filed: February 13, 2023

Special Processing Unit (SPU);  
Damages Decision Based on Proffer;  
Influenza (Flu) Vaccine; Shoulder  
Injury Related to Vaccine  
Administration (SIRVA)

*Ronald Craig Homer, Conway, Homer, P.C., Boston, MA, for Petitioner.*

*Meghan Murphy, U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for Respondent.*

### **DECISION AWARDING DAMAGES<sup>1</sup>**

On December 21, 2020, Laurel Acosta filed a petition for compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. §300aa-10, *et seq.*<sup>2</sup> (the “Vaccine Act”). Petitioner alleges that she suffered a shoulder injury related to vaccine administration (“SIRVA”) caused by an influenza (“flu”) vaccine administered on October 16, 2019. Petition at 1. The case was assigned to the Special Processing Unit of the Office of Special Masters.

On October 21, 2022, a ruling on entitlement was issued, finding Petitioner entitled to compensation for a SIRVA. On February 8, 2023, Respondent filed a proffer on award of compensation (“Proffer”) indicating Petitioner should be awarded \$62,500.00 for pain and suffering. Proffer at 1. In the Proffer, Respondent represented that Petitioner agrees

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<sup>1</sup> Because this unpublished Decision contains a reasoned explanation for the action in this case, I am required to post it on the United States Court of Federal Claims' website in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002. 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2012) (Federal Management and Promotion of Electronic Government Services). **This means the Decision will be available to anyone with access to the internet.** In accordance with Vaccine Rule 18(b), Petitioner has 14 days to identify and move to redact medical or other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of privacy. If, upon review, I agree that the identified material fits within this definition, I will redact such material from public access.

<sup>2</sup> National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755. Hereinafter, for ease of citation, all section references to the Vaccine Act will be to the pertinent subparagraph of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa (2012).

with the proffered award. *Id.* Based on the record as a whole, I find that Petitioner is entitled to an award as stated in the Proffer.

Pursuant to the terms stated in the attached Proffer, **I award Petitioner a lump sum payment of \$62,500.00 for pain and suffering in the form of a check payable to Petitioner.** This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under Section 15(a).

The Clerk of Court is directed to enter judgment in accordance with this decision.<sup>3</sup>

**IT IS SO ORDERED.**

**s/Brian H. Corcoran**

Brian H. Corcoran  
Chief Special Master

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<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment can be expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

**IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS  
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS**

LAUREL ACOSTA,

Petitioner,

V.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH  
AND HUMAN SERVICES,

Respondent.

No. 20-1928V

Chief Special Master Corcoran

ECF

**RESPONDENT'S PROFFER ON AWARD OF COMPENSATION**

On December 21, 2020, Laurel Acosta (“petitioner”) filed a petition for compensation (“Petition”) under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (“Vaccine Act” or “Act”), as amended. The petition alleges that as a result of receiving an influenza (“flu”) vaccination on October 16, 2019, petitioner suffered from a shoulder injury related to vaccine administration (“SIRVA”). *See* Petition at Preamble. On October 21, 2022, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (“respondent”) filed a Rule 4(c) Report indicating that this case is appropriate for compensation under the terms of the Act. ECF No. 31. On October 21, 2022, Chief Special Master Corcoran issued a Ruling on Entitlement finding petitioner entitled to compensation. ECF No. 32.

## **I. Items of Compensation**

### A. Pain and Suffering

Respondent proffers that petitioner should be awarded \$62,500.00 in pain and suffering. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a)(4). This amount represents all elements of compensation to which petitioner is entitled under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a). Petitioner agrees.

**II. Form of the Award**

Petitioner is a competent adult. Evidence of guardianship is not required in this case. Respondent recommends that the compensation provided to petitioner should be made through a lump sum payment as described below and requests that Chief Special Master Corcoran's decision and the Court's judgment award the following<sup>1</sup>: a lump sum payment of \$62,500.00, in the form of a check payable to petitioner.

**III. Summary of Recommended Payments Following Judgment**

Lump sum payable to petitioner, Laurel Acosta:	<b>\$62,500.00</b>
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Respectfully submitted,

BRIAN M. BOYNTON  
Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General

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Director  
Torts Branch, Civil Division

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Deputy Director  
Torts Branch, Civil Division

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Assistant Director  
Torts Branch, Civil Division

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<sup>1</sup> Should petitioner die prior to entry of judgment, the parties reserve the right to move the Court for appropriate relief. In particular, respondent would oppose any award for future, unreimbursed expenses, future lost earnings and future pain and suffering.

/s/ Meghan R. Murphy  
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DATED: February 9, 2023